

Statement by MAG on Article 5

(Check Against Delivery)

Many thanks Mr Co-Chair,

I would like to make two general remarks on Article 5 implementation. But first, I would like to use this opportunity to thank Zimbabwe for welcoming MAG into their country. We are looking forward to working with the national authorities and our colleagues in other NGOs to support the Article 5 plan.

We also thank Bosnia & Herzegovina for welcoming us. MAG started operations in May this year, with support from the United States. An additional team deployed this week with new funding from the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Many thanks to both donors, and to the respective national authorities for your valuable cooperation.

The first issue I would like to raise concerns the scope of Article 5 in relation to locally manufactured anti-personnel landmines. These are sometimes referred to as improvised, homemade or artisanal landmines, or as 'pressure plate improvised explosive devices'. Some terminology may overlap, but we feel there should not be any confusion over whether or not these devices are covered by this Convention. They are. As a result, they should always be included under all Article 5 contamination and progress reporting.

Anti-personnel mines are not defined by whom they were deployed, or in what sort of factory they were produced. Anti-personnel landmines are characterised primarily by the way in which they are initiated – by the presence, proximity or contact of a person. When we use terms like 'artisanal' or 'locally produced', it is solely as a descriptive term. Dealing with locally produced anti-personnel mines for humanitarian ends has been part of our work for several decades in several continents. We have tackled it effectively within this Convention.

We would like, however to highlight again a new landmine emergency in the Middle East. Its scale is vast and is taking place in one of the most complex of humanitarian emergencies. Anti-personnel landmines have been produced systematically and in the tens of thousands by Daesh/ISIS. They have been deployed in fields, roads, villages, towns, buildings and homes. This goes against the norm and stigma against victim-activated munitions set by this Convention.

As well as upholding norms, treating locally manufactured AP landmines as what they are – landmines – has practical benefits, and is helping humanitarian organisations to respond. It lets us draw on the body of sector good practice we have developed over almost three decades. It helps to identify and map contamination accurately, and manage information effectively so that we can

respond to emergency priorities now, while making sure that all contamination is cleared in the future.

In short, it is integral to the implementation of Article 5.

Including new contamination from anti-personnel landmines under Article 5 may well see contamination and clearance estimates increase in some locations. It will probably require extra capacity and support to address it, and, in a small number of countries, it may affect progress toward completion. But the cost of not including all anti-personnel landmines under this Convention – however they are made – will be far higher. And it will always be counted in the number of lives and limbs lost, as well as in dollars.

The second area concerns the links between Article 5 and international cooperation and assistance. This is something that several States Parties have raised in recent years. We raise it here in the context of Angola's extension request, but also in the context of the 2025 completion goal in general.

Angola was one of the countries which captured the attention and conscience of the world two decades ago. This year, Angola remains a symbol of many countries where completing clearance is possible, but under-supported.

There is now an accurate estimate of Angola's remaining contamination – it is 118 square kilometres – and with an aim of completing by 2025. This is achievable with the right support. Yet support to mine action in Angola falls far below what is needed. Funding has dropped by 86% in the last decade and, with it, demining capacity. The organisations that are left have had to cut clearance capacity by a comparable amount.

In the meantime, 66% of the rural population – those most affected by landmines – live on less than US\$2/day. Two decades later, they are waiting.

The prospect of failure in Angola would leave generations that have never known conflict trapped in fear and poverty. Yet there is still time to make sure that minefields in countries like Angola are cleared and not forgotten. To choose success over failure.

So we call on states and individuals to make that choice. To support Angola and other countries where funding falls far short of what is needed.

To do that would surely make 2017 an historic year on the path to achieving a #LandMineFree2025.

Thank you.

ENDS